

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 5, 9-13 and 20-21 are presently active in this case, Claims 1, 5 and 21 having been amended by the present Amendment.

The present amendment is supplemental to the amendment filed Jan. 22, 2004. The present amendment is made to correct a typographical informality in Claim 21 and to clarify the subject matter of Claims 1 and 5 consistent with the specification.

As described in the specification, the present invention has a feature that a plurality of fiducial marks used in each measurement sequence are arranged dispersed on a plurality of fiducial mark plates, and therefore, the fiducial mark plates can be arranged in and on a small space on a wafer stage, which enables downsizing of the wafer stage. The present amendment makes clear in Claims 1 and 5 that a position of the second fiducial mark plate on the first stage is different from a position of a first fiducial mark plate on the first stage and that the same is true on the second stage. No new matter has been added.

With regard to Claims 1-3, 5, 20 and 21, none of the cited references discloses:

- (1) a stage unit comprising a first stage and a second stage,
- (2) a first fiducial mark and a second fiducial mark arranged on respective first and second fiducial mark plates provided on both of the first and second stages, and
- (3) the second fiducial mark plate being arranged at a different position than the first fiducial mark plate on the respective stages.

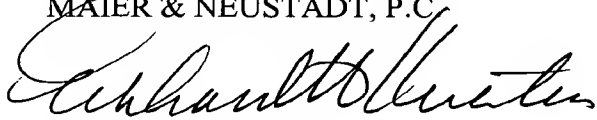
Consequently, in view of the present amendment and the amendment filed Jan. 22, 2004, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

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Consequently, in view of the present amendment and the amendment filed Jan. 22, 2004, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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